

Water Quality Cooperative Agreements
US EPA Region 3 NPDES
FY 2008 Request for Proposals (RFP)

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Overview

General Information

Agency:	U.S. EPA Region 3
Document Type:	Initial Notice
Funding Opportunity Title:	Water Quality Cooperative Agreements US EPA Region 3 NPDES FY 2008 Request for Proposals (RFP)
Funding Opportunity Number:	EPA-R3WPD-08-01 (see http://www.fedgrants.gov)
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
CFDA Number:	66.463 -- Water Quality Cooperative Agreements
Posted Date:	December 13, 2007
Current Due Date for Applications:	February 19, 2008 (45 days) Proposals must be postmarked February 19, 2008. Proposals postmarked after this date will not be reviewed or considered for funding under this program.
Archive Date:	January 29, 2008 (30 days)
Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement or Grant
Category of Funding Activity:	Environment
Expected Number of Awards:	2
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$136,044.00
Award Ceiling:	\$ 136,044.00
Award Floor:	\$ 50,000.00
Cost Sharing Requirement:	None

Eligible Applicants

State water pollution control agencies
Interstate agencies
Indian Tribes
Colleges and universities
Individuals
Public organizations
Nonprofit organizations

Agency Name

US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3, Water Protection Division, Office of State and Watershed Partnerships.

Description

Region 3 is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants interested in applying for Federal assistance for Water Quality Cooperative Agreements (WQCA) under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 104(b)(3) for unique and innovative projects to be conducted within the states of Delaware (DE), District of Columbia (DC), Maryland (MD), Pennsylvania (PA), Virginia (VA), and West Virginia (WV) that address the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. Specifically, the Region is requesting projects that will advance NPDES program strategies to implement watershed-based efforts, reduce impacts of wet weather

flows, demonstrate collaborative innovative approaches to control or reduce pollution to protect and restore water quality on a watershed basis, etc. Projects awarded assistance under this announcement may involve geospatial information. Region 3 intends to award up to an estimated \$136,044.00 to eligible applicants through assistance agreements that may range in size from \$50,000 up to \$136,044. From the proposals received, EPA estimates up to 2 projects may be selected to submit full applications. Region 3 reserves the right to award less than the total amount available, to reject all proposals, and to make no awards.

Important Dates

December 13, 2007– EPA posts the Request for Proposals.

February 19, 2008, 11:59 pm EST – Proposals must be postmarked or received on or before www.grants.gov.

March 11, 2008– Proposals identified for funding will be requested to submit formal application

April 22, 2008 – Complete application and work plan submitted to EPA (30 days).

May, 2008 -- Final awards processed.

Please note that EPA may modify the schedule at any time.

Full Text Announcement

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Region 3 is soliciting proposals for the CFDA 66.463 Water Quality Cooperative Agreements program under Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act for projects in Region 3, specifically Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. These funds may be used to conduct and promote the coordination and acceleration of investigations, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution.

The purpose of this assistance program is to provide funding for unique and innovative projects that address the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) Permits Program. Specifically, we are seeking unique and innovative proposals for a training/certificate course/program on "Performance Based Planning and Design for Environmental Stewardship in Stormwater and Watershed Management, Industrial Byproduct Reuse, and Ecosystem Management using a Green Highways Partnership, Green Infrastructure, and Watershed Approach" to be conducted in DE, DC, MD, PA, VA and WV that will advance NPDES program strategies to implement watershed-based efforts; watershed permitting and trading; storm water programs; and demonstrate collaborative innovative approaches to control or reduce pollution to protect and restore water quality on a watershed basis. These priorities and example projects are further defined below.

Funds awarded through this program may not be used to support continuing program operations such as ongoing administrative, program, research or other ineligible costs.

Construction costs, whether or not required to carry out a demonstration project, and acquisition of land are not eligible for funding under this program.

This is a solicitation for proposals only.

This program falls under Goal 2 (Clean and Safe Water), Objective 2 (Protect water Quality), Sub-objective 1 (Improve water quality on a watershed basis), of the strategy that EPA is using to meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. Special emphasis will be on removing barriers to pending NPDES permitting activities.

US EPA Region 3 Priorities

EPA is seeking unique and innovative projects that address the four Regional priorities below. This may include, but is not limited to, the example project listed.

- (1) Watershed Approaches,**
- (2) Storm Water Programs,**
- (3) Low Impact Development, and**
- (4) Municipal Wet Weather Programs**

Example Project: Development and application of an on-going training and certificate course/program for the regulator and regulated community in ***“Performance Based Planning and Design for Integrating Environmental Stewardship in Stormwater /Watershed Management, Industrial Byproduct Reuse, and Ecosystem Management by Using A Green Highways Partnership, Green Infrastructure, and Watershed Approach”*** to ensure sustainable advances in water quality on a watershed basis. The training and certificate program should teach the intended audience how to design projects, developments, communities, etc with an appropriate mix of innovative and traditional Best Management Practices (BMPs) to complement and incorporate green infrastructure concepts so that the overall benefit to the watershed is “beyond compliance” and “better than before”. The course/certificate program should also integrate at least the following for a comprehensive stewardship/sustainable planning approach:

- Integrated stormwater/watershed management on a watershed basis for linear projects
- Green Highways Partnership concepts including stormwater banking, multi-beneficial mitigation measures, stormwater trading, and other innovative concepts
- Structural/non-structural BMPs, Low impact development and/or distributed systems
- Green Infrastructure concepts and applications
- Design for infiltration practices, including permeable, environmentally-friendly pavements and other green technologies, etc
- Environmental regulatory requirements for (including but not limited to): stormwater, water quality, wetlands, terrestrial resources, threatened and endangered species, cultural and historical resources
- Incorporation of industrial byproducts in design of projects and BMPs
- Modules tailored for personnel in municipalities, MS-4s, transportation, real estate & commercial development and consultant communities.
- Emphasis should be placed on providing the class attendees with an understanding of the need for continuous coordination of environmental stewardship provisions among planning, design, and construction phases so as to ensure that all stewardship provisions are included in the final outcome.
- Concepts including: a natural systems approach, a water balance approach to stormwater/Watershed Management.

Environmental Results

All applicants are required to link their projects to environmental results. Environmental results are used as a way to gauge a project's performance using output and outcome measures. The term "output" means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specific date. The term "outcome" means an environmental result, effect or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective.

Region 3 expects these projects for innovations, demonstrations, and studies to directly and indirectly benefit the environment by accelerating the reduction of point and non-point waste loads on surface waters, and by improving the definition of water quality goals.

For example, an expected output would be the number of BMPs installed, while the expected outcome would be sediment reduction resulting in improved water quality. Another expected output would be development of a watershed monitoring and assessment strategy, while the expected outcome would be increased knowledge resulting in more effective water quality monitoring decisions.

For some projects, the expected outcomes are to expand the number of organizations and people with a potential to participate in the federal waste reduction effort, and/or to increase the effectiveness of organizations and people already involved. The specific outputs expected from these projects are reducing wastewater permits backlogs, better coordinating and considering endangered species in permitting, or accelerating state or tribal primacy of federal permitting - depending on the priority area addressed.

For other projects, the expected outcomes are improved definition of water quality goals, strategies, solutions, and problems. The specific outputs expected from these projects are improved timeliness of actions on water quality standards, more complete waste load allocations, better consideration of endangered species in standards, or improved definition of on-site-related water quality problems - depending on the priority area addressed. Proposals must have plans to further define and measure one or more of these environmental outputs/results.

Environmental results not only assess the success of an applicant's project, they also gauge the effectiveness of EPA's programs by ensuring that EPA's limited resources are used to further the Agency's Strategic Goals. The Strategic Goal for the Water Quality Cooperative Agreements is:

Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water

Objective 2.2: Protect Water Quality

Sub-objective 2.2.1: Improve Water Quality on a Watershed Basis

For more information on EPA's Strategic Plan go to: <http://www.epa.gov/ocfoipage/plan/plan.htm>

II. Award Information

EPA Region 3's Office of Watersheds intends to award to eligible applicants assistance agreements ranging from \$50,000 to \$136,044 for CFDA 66.463 Water Quality Cooperative Agreements (WQCA). The total funds available are estimated as \$136,044.00. EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 4 months after the original selection decisions.

Region 3 WQCA project awards have ranged from \$30,000 to \$300,000 and averaged about \$120,000 over the last 3 years. From the proposals received, EPA estimates that 1 to 2 projects may be selected to submit full applications. Proposals must address the Region 3 Priorities outlined in Section I of this RFP to be considered.

This program provides funding for short-term projects with a duration of 3 years or less to advance innovation and improvements in water quality programs. Proposed projects should be designed to be completed within the scope of the assistance and project period proposed. No additional funding for this program is anticipated.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

Region 3 reserves the right to award less than the total amount available, to reject all proposals, and/or to make no awards.

Cooperative Agreements and Grants are types of assistance agreements; they are different. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by EPA; Grants do not. The type of assistance agreement that will be issued to award assistance for the selected proposals will be determined by the Project Officer based upon the scope and circumstances of each selected proposal.

EPA Region 3 will work closely with the recipient organization during the finalization of the work plan to determine EPA's involvement with the project. If it is determined that there will be no substantial EPA involvement, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a grant. If it is determined substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient organization during the performance of the approved activities, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a cooperative agreement.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

US EPA Region 3 is soliciting proposals from State water pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, tribes, colleges and universities, individuals, and other public or nonprofit organizations interested in applying for Federal assistance for Water Quality Cooperative Agreements (CFDA 66.463) under the Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3).

In order to be eligible, Interstate agency projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one State, or local government.

Applicants who have an existing agreement under this program are eligible to compete for new awards.

The applicant must be eligible for award consideration at the time of proposal submission or they will not be considered for funding.

Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required. However, applicants will be evaluated on their ability to leverage funds (see Section V Criteria for more information).

Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Proposals must address the Region 3 Priorities described in Section I of this RFP. Proposals that do not address the Priorities will not be considered for funding.

Proposals to purchase land, to perform construction, that fail to conform to the submission requirements of this announcement or appear to be from a for-profit organization will not be reviewed or considered.

Proposals to conduct work or to benefit waters outside the geographic area of Region 3 (DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV) will not be reviewed or considered.

Proposals must substantially comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

In addition, proposals must be postmarked or received through www.grants.gov, as specified in Section IV of this announcement, on or before the proposal submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposal reaches the designated person/office specified in Section IV of the announcement by the submission deadline.

Proposals postmarked after the submission deadline will be considered late and returned to the sender without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling. For hard copy submissions, where Section IV requires proposal receipt by a specific person/office by the submission deadline, receipt by an agency mailroom is not sufficient. Applicants should confirm receipt of their proposal with Denise Rigney as soon as possible after the submission deadline—failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the eligibility determination.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Address to Request Application Package

Only proposals are being requested at this time. There is no application form or package available or necessary. The requested format and information is discussed below.

Contents and Form of Application Submission

Proposals must be limited to 10 pages (single-sided equivalent), single-spaced, and 10 - 12 size font. Full assistance application packages should not be submitted at this time. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals ranging in size from \$50,000 to \$136,044. Applicants should be sure to address the relevance of their project to the selection criteria outlined in section V. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

The following format must be followed:

1. Name of project
 - a) Include a concise (100 word maximum) summary of the project
2. Contact information (Individual and organization name, address phone, fax and email)

3. Proposed Budget

- a) Identify all federal and other funding sources for the project including the recipient cost-share.
- b) Identify categories for funding distribution (supplies, contractual, equipment, staff, etc).
- c) Identify cost and labor effort budgets by task
- d) Identify applicant contributions. Cost-sharing is not required but will contribute to the strength of a proposal and commitment to the project.

4. Project Description

- a) Describe of the project area
- b) Describe how the project relates to one of the regional priorities identified in Section I
- c) Describe components of the project, a project narrative containing
 - Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern;
 - Project Goals and Objectives (describe in measurable terms the environmental issue to be addressed);
 - Project Tasks (outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals);
 - Commitments (milestones and outputs for each Task)
 - Schedule (when you expect to complete significant steps, tasks and milestones/ outputs)
- d) Describe how the project fits with relevant planning and water quality management goals
- e) Describe any partnerships, community support etc.
- f) Describe applicant's capability to perform the work
 - Brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (no resumes are required)
 - Brief description of organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.
 - Brief description of the applicant organization, experience related to the area of interest, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to implement the proposed project.
- g) Submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5, and preferably EPA agreements) and describe (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports and (iii) describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section V, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from EPA files and from current and prior Federal agency grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.
- h) Describe the respective roles and responsibilities of the applicant, partners (if applicable) and EPA (if applicable) in carrying out the project commitment(s).

5. Outcomes/Results Tracking and Reporting

- a) Plan for tracking, measuring, and reporting progress toward achieving expected outcomes/outputs and results. Proposals must address the applicant's past performance in documenting the achievement of expected outcomes/outputs including, if applicable, satisfactory explanations of why outcomes/outputs were not achieved. Provide list of public agencies that have previously awarded assistance to applicant and documentation that proves past performance with those awards were successful.
- b) Describe the expected environmental outputs/outcome from the project in terms of those listed in Section I of this announcement. Describe how they will be measured and accomplished as a result of the project.

6. Outreach, Communication and Information Transfer

- a) Plan for distributing project results to the public and interested parties. This plan must include a detailed description as to how the applicant proposes to ensure the transfer of knowledge gained by the project.

7. Confidential Business Information

EPA recommends that no confidential information be included in proposals. However, in accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

Pre-proposal/Application Assistance and Communications.

In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications/proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement.

Submission Dates and Times

Proposals must be postmarked or received through www.grants.gov on or before February 19, 2008, 11:59pm EST. Proposals postmarked after this date will not be reviewed or considered for funding under this program.

Funding Restrictions

A non-federal contribution is not required but will contribute to the strength of a proposal. Applicants will be evaluated on their ability to leverage funds (See Section V Criteria for more information). The applicant share must be for an allowable cost and may be provided by the applicant or an eligible partner organization or institution. The applicant share may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. If the match is provided by a partner organization, the applicant is still responsible for proper accountability and documentation.

Other Federal money cannot be used as the applicant's share for this grant program unless authorized by the statute governing the award of the other Federal funds. Any restrictions on the use of federal share funds also apply to the use of applicant's share funds.

Funds awarded through this program may not be used to support continuing program operations such as ongoing administrative, program, research or other ineligible costs.

Construction costs, whether or not required to carry out a demonstration project, and acquisition of land are not eligible for funding under this program.

All assistance agreements are subject to Federal audit.

Management Fees: When formulating budgets for proposals/applications, applicants must not include management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and indirect costs at the rate approved by the applicants cognizant audit agency, or at the rate provided for by the terms of the agreement negotiated with EPA. The term "management fees or similar charges" refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs that are not allowable under EPA assistance agreements. Management fees or similar charges may not be used to improve or expand the project funded under this agreement, except to the extent authorized as a direct cost of carrying out the scope of work.

Intergovernmental Review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs may be applicable to awards, resulting from this announcement. Applicants selected for funding may be required to provide a copy of their proposal to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) or the States where the project will be conducted for review, pursuant to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. This review is not required with the proposal and not all states require such a review.

Other Submission Requirements

Please note that you may choose to apply one of two ways: If you wish to apply with a hard copy submission, please follow the instructions under "Hard Copy Submission" below. If you wish to apply electronically via <http://www.grants.gov/>, please follow the appropriate instructions under "Electronic Submission" below. EPA encourages applicants to submit their proposal materials electronically through <http://www.grants.gov>. Please only participate in one form of submission.

Hard Copy Submission

If submitting hard copy proposals, please send three copies (double-sided printing is encouraged) of the proposals to:

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3,
Water Protection Division, Office of State and Watershed Partnerships (3WP10)
Attn: Denise Rigney
1650 Arch Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

Hard copy proposals must be postmarked on or before January 21, 2008, 11:59 pm EST. Proposals postmarked after this date will not be reviewed or considered for funding under this announcement.

Electronic Submission

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an AOR and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for the announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the "PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, EPA-R3WPD-08-01, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.463), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the "Application" button at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application Submission Deadline: Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) on or before February 19, 2008, 11:59pm EST.

Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to [offices should provide the EPA url link to the full announcement so applicants can easily access it if necessary] or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Find Grant Opportunities" on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency.

Proposal/Application Materials

The following forms and documents are required to be submitted under this announcement:

- I. Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- II. Project Proposal - see Section IV **Contents and Form of Application Submission for further instructions**

The proposal/application package *must* include all of the following materials:

I. Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

II. Narrative Proposal

See Section IV **“Contents and Form of Application Submission”** for further instructions.

Note: Microsoft Vista and Word 2007 Users

Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista. Grants.gov will be reviewing this new product to determine if it can be supported in the future.

In addition, the new version of Microsoft Word saves documents with the extension .DOCX. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension .DOCX. When submitting Microsoft Word attachments to Grants.gov, please use the version of Microsoft Word that ends in .DOC. If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Application Preparation and Submission Instructions

Documents I and II listed under Application Materials above should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

For document I, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action will move the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

For document II, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare your narrative proposal as described above in Section IV **“Contents and Form of Application”** and save the document to your computer as an MS Word, PDF or WordPerfect file. When you are ready to attach your proposal to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach your proposal (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename;” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “Add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary. Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY08 – Assoc Prog Supp – 1st Submission” or “Applicant Name – FY 08 Assoc Prog Supp – Back-up Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name – FY06 Assoc Prog Supp – 2nd Submission.”

Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

In the "Application Filing Name" box, your AOR should enter your organization's name (abbreviate where possible), the fiscal year (e.g., FY08), and the grant category (e.g., Assoc Prog Supp). The filing name should not exceed 40 characters. From the "Grant Application Package" page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the "Submit" button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Denise M. Rigney at 215-814-2726 or email at rigney.denise@epa.gov.

Application packages submitted thru grants.gov will be time/date stamped electronically.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Denise M. Rigney at 215-814-2726 or email at rigney.denise@epa.gov. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

V. Application Review Information

Criteria

EPA will award CFDA 66.463 Water Quality Cooperative Agreement assistance on a competitive basis. The competition process is regulated under 40 CFR 35.362. The following criteria will be considered on a 100 point scale:

30 points: How well the applicant has defined a plan for performing the proposed project including the ability to maintain a sustainable certification program if applicable, results tracking and reporting, and ability to specify well-defined outputs and well-defined outcomes (results), as outlined in the proposal guidelines; to support reasonable expectation that meaningful environmental benefit will result from the proposed work and results will be of demonstrable (defensible) quality.

20 points: The degree to which the project addresses the regional priorities identified in Section I. Project benefits, technical feasibility, adherence to total cost guidance, etc.

10 Points: The degree to which the proposal demonstrates the applicant's plan and ability for measurement, tracking and documentation of concrete environmental results, outcomes, and outputs (see Section I of this announcement).

5 points: Leveraging of other resources (e.g., cost share, participation by other organizations) and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate (i) how they will coordinate the use of EPA funding with other Federal and/or non Federal sources of funds to leverage additional resources to carry out the proposed project(s) and/or (ii) that EPA funding will compliment activities relevant to the proposed project(s) carried out by the applicant with other sources of funds or resources. Applicants may use their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share if the standards at 40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24, as

applicable, are met. Only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or cost shares. Other Federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority (e.g. HUD's Community Development Block Grants).

5 points: Communication and Marketing plan for distributing results of the project. How well the plan transfers knowledge gained as a result of the project to relevant and interested communities.

30 points: **Past Performance--Programmatic Capability and Reporting on Environmental Results:** Under this criterion, the Agency will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicants: **(i) (7 pts)** past performance in successfully completing and managing federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years, **(ii) (7 pts)** history of meeting reporting requirements on federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last 3 years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under those agreements, and **(iii) (6 pts)** past performance in documenting and/or reporting on progress towards achieving the expected outcomes and outputs (e.g., results) under federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) similar in size, scope and relevance to the proposed project within the last 3 years; and, if such progress was not made whether the documentation and/or reports satisfactorily explained why not, **(iv) (5 points)** their organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and **(v) (5 points)** their staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. Note: In evaluating applicants under this criterion, the Agency will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance or reporting history (items i, ii, and iii above), will receive a neutral score for those elements of this criterion.

Other Factors

The proposals will be evaluated by EPA staff on the elements shown above. EPA staff will also consider the following factors in their evaluations: programmatic priorities, project diversity, program diversity and geographic diversity.

Review and Selection Process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated and ranked by a panel comprised of EPA employees. The review panel will evaluate each proposal using the selection criteria disclosed in this announcement (Section V) and rank them according to their score. Recommendations, which will be made by EPA Region 3 staff, will be based on the evaluations conducted by the review panel and the other factors described above in Section V. The Selection Official will make the final selection decisions.

All applicants will be notified when the selection process is complete.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

December 13, 2007– EPA posts the Request for Proposals.

February 19, 2008, 11:59 pm EST – Proposals must be postmarked or submitted through grants.gov

March 11, 2008– Proposals identified for funding will be requested to submit formal application

April 22, 2008 – Complete application and work plan submitted to EPA (30 days).

May, 2008 -- Final awards processed.

VI. Award Administration Information

Award Notices

Proposals that are selected for continuance in the process will be sent an application kit for funding. These applicants must submit a detailed work plan and the completed application for funding. Receipt of an application kit is not a guarantee of funding, and is not an authorization to begin work or incur project costs.

Deadlines must be met, qualifications must be verified, the work plan must be approved by the EPA Project Officer, and financial assistance awarded for funding to occur.

Cooperative Agreements and Grants are types of assistance agreements; they are different. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by EPA; Grants do not. The type of assistance agreement that will be issued to award assistance for the selected proposals will be determined by the Project Officer based upon the scope and circumstances of each selected proposal.

EPA Region 3 will work closely with the recipient organization during the finalization of the work plan to determine EPA's involvement with the project. If it is determined that there will be no substantial EPA involvement, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a grant. If it is determined substantial involvement is anticipated between EPA and the recipient organization during the performance of the approved activities, the assistance agreement will be awarded as a cooperative agreement.

As part of a formal application, applicants will be required to complete the "Environmental Results in Assistance Agreements" template. More information will be provided if your organization is selected.

Upon receipt of a complete application, work plan, and budget, the recommendations for funding of the award will be made to the Regional Administrator. When all funding decisions are complete, a grant award notification will be issued to the recipients for acceptance. This is the conclusion of the competitive award process.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted on the EPA Region 3 website address: <http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd> at the conclusion of the competition. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Statutory Authority and Applicable Regulations

Water Quality Cooperative Agreement projects are authorized under the Clean Water Act, Section 104(b)(3). Regulations governing the award and administration of Water Quality Cooperative

Agreements are 40 CFR Part 30 for institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations; 40 CFR Part 31 for state and local governments; 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A for state, interstate, and local government agencies; and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B for tribes.

Non-profit Applicants

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

Indirect Costs

If indirect costs are budgeted in the assistance application (grant or cooperative agreement) and the non-profit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, an indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan will need to be prepared and submitted in accordance with the appropriate Federal cost principle, OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" or OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" within ninety (90) days from the effective date of the award.

If a local government does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments." The local government recipient whose cognizant Federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency within six (6) months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant Federal agency has not been identified by OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

Peer Review

Most documents or products prepared for and intended for public distribution under EPA Region 3 assistance agreements will be subject to the peer review process. Some products/documents produced under this grant program may be exempted from peer review process. Assistance agreement applicants should allow an eight-week time period in project schedules for each product which is subject to the peer review process. Concurrent review of multiple project products is possible. Scheduling preliminary submission of draft documents to the project officer throughout the project period will facilitate the peer review process.

Quality Assurance

If environmental research including direct measurements or data generation, environmental modeling, compilation of data from literature or electronic media, and data supporting the design, construction, and operation of environmental technologies is to be performed as part of the funding agreement, a Quality Assurance Project Plan and submission date to EPA for approval must be identified unless the organization can show a previously EPA approved Quality Management Plan. No federal funds may be expended or requested for reimbursement for data collection or environmental sampling activities prior to submittal, and approval, of the Quality Assurance Project Plan to/by the EPA Project Officer.

Copyrights

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34 (a). The copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) Any rights of copyright to which a recipient, subrecipient or a contractor purchases ownership with federal support.

Data Sharing

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final work plan. Additionally, recipients of grants for monitoring projects will be required to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STorage and RETrieval). STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water quality, biological and other physical data of known quality for use by State environmental agencies, EPA and other Federal agencies, universities, private citizens, and many other organizations. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Applicants may also want to contact their State agency responsible for entering data into the system. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

Geospatial Information

If geospatial information will result from the proposed project, the selected project will have to meet EPA requirements for such information. The definition of geospatial information is provided in Section VIII below. For the projects selected for funding, the full assistance application must identify any geospatial information that will be created.

DUNS Number Requirement

All applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number when applying for a Federal assistance agreement. Applicants can receive a DUNS number, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711, or visiting the D&B website at: <http://www.dnb.com>.

Reporting

Quarterly electronic and hard copy performance and project status reports and Financial Status Reports will be required to illustrate their progress and document any issues or challenges in accordance with 40 CFR 31.40 and a final report in accordance with 40 CFR 31.41. Quarterly reports should describe project activities and provide the EPA Project Officer with information about project development. The Financial Status Report must accurately account for all federal funds expended and identify appropriate use of federal funds. Other reporting will be established by the Project Officer through the assistance agreement. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental benefits, outcomes, and outputs that result from the work accomplished through the cooperative agreement award. An EPA Project Officer will work with the applicant to achieve the project goals and to provide necessary technical assistance.

Disputes

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/competition/resolution.htm>. Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting the Agency Contact below.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For additional information on this solicitation, please contact:

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3,
Water Division, Office of Watersheds (3WP10),

Attn: Denise Rigney
1650 Arch Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029
Telephone (215)-814-2726
E-mail rigney.denise@epa.gov

For alternate contacts, or contacts on specialized topics, consult the text of this announcement or call the number above for advice.

Contact on Green Highway Partnership topics:

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3,
Water Division, Office of State and Watershed Partnerships (3WP10),
Attn: Denise Rigney, Green Highways Partnership Project Manager,
1650 Arch Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029
Telephone (215)-814-2726
E-mail: rigney.denise@epa.gov

VIII. Other Information

EPA Region 3 reserves the right to award less than the total amount of funds available as a result of this announcement. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals or applications and/or make no award as a result of this announcement. EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of the proposed project. If EPA decides to partially fund the proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and the evaluation/selection process. The EPA Award Official is the only official that can bind the Agency to the expenditure of funds for selected projects resulting from this announcement.

Geospatial Information

Information that identifies the geographic location and characteristics of natural or constructed features or boundaries on the Earth, or applications, tools, and hardware associated with the generation, maintenance, or distribution of such information. This information may be derived from, among other things, GPS, remote sensing, mapping, charting, and surveying technologies, or statistical data.